

BOOTBLACKS FORM TRUSTS.

THE BOYS SHINE NOW IN CORNERS, POOLS, AND LOCAL MONOPOLIES.

Cooperation in This Humble Business—The Work is Done in Hotels, Exchanges, Saloons, and Elsewhere—Improvements Lately Made—Why Not Accommodate Ladies as well as Men?

The tendency in modern civilization to concentrate all sorts of business in few hands is observable in the business of bootblacking. It has been discovered that at many points there is money in it, and at those points enterprising men of various nationalities have taken possession and reaped the profits. Along with this change there has come about a revolution in methods, so that the work is done more conveniently, rapidly, and efficiently than ever.

In old times, when hotels were smaller and numbers not so many, bootblacking was a monopoly of the servants. Now great hotel proprietors do not seem to count upon the bootblacking room as a source of large profit.

Instead of permitting the servants to take the pay, it is almost the prevailing rule for the proprietors either to rent out the privilege or to fit up the room and pay the attendants wages and pocket the profits themselves. When the Palmer hotel at Chicago was sold, the bootblacking privilege was reserved, and it was said that it was worth \$10,000 a year.

At the Hoffman House the bootblack stand has the place of honor—between the office and the bar. The colored men who do the work are paid by the proprietor, and all money paid to them is immediately dropped in a money box in full view of the office. At the Fifth Avenue there is a commodious room fitted up, and the profits go to the hotel. The same is generally true of all large hotels, for the receipts from a good chair are from \$2 to \$5 a day.

The old-fashioned way of putting boots or shoes outside the guest's door is going out of favor. Men do not like to risk getting the wrong shoes in the morning, or to worry about their boots while in a hurry to catch a train. They prefer to sit in the bootblack's chair while putting a cigar, or to push out for a slide while under the care of the barber.

In many barber shops the proprietors hire bootblacks by the week, and reap quite as much profit from the bootblack's chair as from the barber's. Of course, when a man is coming to the city he wants to come with his boots blacked. Whether he comes by train or boat, the bootblack is ready to accommodate him. In the palace cars he cannot escape it. On the ferry-boats the bootblacks await him.

Up to a recent period the immense travel on the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western ferry-boats was accommodated with a lot of prosigious bootblacks, who were there by surveillance, and made some trouble by skylining. They were not always when wanted. Superintendent Woolsey concluded to systematize the thing, and accepted the proposal of "Pete," a bright young Italian, who offered seventy dollars a month for the privilege. Pete has been doing the work very satisfactorily about six months. The rough, badly dressed, and untidy lads have been replaced by tidy boys in a uniform cap. Each of the eighteen boats of the company has two of these boys. Pete tires them by the week and trusts to their honesty to turn in what they receive.

Exactly how many bootblacks are not known to us, but they are required to give away from them every excuse and pretext for the formation of dangerous societies; it is evident that the right party securing the confederations of the members is its chief strength, but it is not true, but he did not give any explanation.

The documents in the hands of the bank officer show that the bank credit was negotiated and sold same twenty railroad shares for a woman named Nichols, 74 years of age, and that she had no money to pay for the shares. It had been sold for \$100, and the returns to Mrs. Nichols lost over \$100 by the transaction with other cases of a similar character.

Mr. Budd is the president of the corporation which has been formed to make the body of the people, with all its faults, should be entitled to the same protection as the rest of the population.

There seems to be no good reason why the men comfort and convenience that are at the disposal of the women should not also be at the disposal of women.

The only wonder is that some of our enterprising business men have not organized a society to tax themselves for two cents a day.

A boy can get a fair outfit for a dollar.

The price is generally five cents a shoe, one of which is a pair of leather shoes.

Tony, a boy, has a sign "Ten cents for new shoes." An old shoe costs ten cents.

There is a growing tendency on the part of the boys to charge a little extra for the services of the laundry in the parks with the pretensions of a "three-cent wash." Such a wash, however, does not include a very careful polish of the garments, and is followed by a charge of twenty-five cents.

"A good son never looks back."

It is a remarkable feature of the shoe-cleaning trade that the men who are engaged in the preparation of women's shoes are all cleaned and polished at home. Of course it is evident that they do not do ordinary cleaning, but they do not clean the buttons, bows, and ribbons, nor the lace, nor the collars, nor the cuffs, nor the pockets.

None of the above charges are for leather.

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